

# Is the Church a Relic?

by Ray L. Straub

There are dire predictions for the future of the Christian faith. Many critics have ASSUMED that to believe in the God of heaven, is to cling to a has-been era of civilization. Is the church a relic of bygone days? Was it just a fantasy? This article reveals that the power of God remains the same vital force it has always been. The church is expected to fulfill its role in society, and to be the great influence of present-day living. The question lies with us. If we fulfill our commitment, it will not be a relic.



**W**e're having the worst recession in 25 years, and I don't see any recovery in sight," observed a church leader. The denomination with which he is affiliated is not unique in this experience.

Over the past decade Bible sales have dropped about 25 per cent. Church newspapers and magazines are steadily losing subscribers. Enrollment in Sunday schools has declined every year for the past six years.

A once-thriving parish in the wealthy Maryland suburb of Washington, D. C., reports decline in both attendance and financial support. In 1963, income from pledges and plate offerings totaled nearly \$140,000. Despite inflated prices and salary raises over the years since then, this parish considered that it would be lucky to make \$125,000 in 1970. Attendance at all services during 1963 totalled nearly 72,000. In 1969, it was only 27,000.

These statistics are evidence to many who contend that the church is a relic; that she represents nothing more than the remains of a revered memory to great causes, saints and martyrs that gave her a vigorous role in days gone by. They declare that the church is powerless.

Further evidence supporting these contentions is found within the church as of our time. Ancient rituals are witlessly carried on. The language used is ancient, verbose and communicates poorly. An average church service produces little that is remembered and offers no detectable inspiration.

The church seems helpless to achieve her own goals, as short-sighted and unchallenging as they are. She stands for brotherhood but coddles and practices prejudice and bigotry. From this she seeks no healing. Her children memorize



the listing of the fruits of the spirit, but in the competitive world of economics their parents are angry, resentful, and covetous.

Churchgoers have difficulty giving a reason why they attend. Instead of being attracted by the Power of God's presence, some feel pressed to attend by "peer power." They have been taught that it is "nice" and "right" to go to church, and so they do. They are not responding to the invitation of God, but they are there because their fellows expect it. They prefer church attendance to being ostracized by their peers.

Some attend because they feel they should offer pious recognition to the infinite or the unknown. Their worship is akin to that of the men of Athens who constructed an altar and placed upon it the inscription, "TO THE UNKNOWN GOD" (Acts 17:23). They suspect that there is a God, and they fear there may be a life hereafter. They feel that their occasional proximity to believers will connect them to heaven's switchboard—if it exists.

Others may attend church for the reason that some criticize it—because it is old. Here nice old stories are told. Here is rest from rapid change, technology, new theories, outlandish fads. To some the future looks bleak; the past looks bright. Where, other than at church, can one find a more consistent and glowing presentation and defense of the past?

Some go for the sake of their children. Some go to church because they always have; because their preacher thinks they should; because they have a responsibility there, such as teaching, singing, or ushering; because they enjoy seeing friends; because they like to get out; because they have nice clothes to model; or because their preacher says what they like to hear. Some attend consistently despite the fact that, more often than

not, they leave feeling worse than when they arrived.

Is the church a relic? Is it no more than a monument to those who once carried on a genuine, God-given purpose? Is God now through with the church that carried His name for centuries?

Answers are found by determining the purpose of the church. We may then see the extent of our own contribution toward making the church what she is.

### *Offers a Unique Fellowship*

One purpose of the church is to offer fellowship possessing a unique quality. Associations are established on common interests. Men band together because they have similar goals, backgrounds or experiences. Christians enjoy a fellowship based on a spiritual kinship.

This fellowship does not depend on intellectual or economic achievement. It is not based on race or place of residence. It comes when we receive salvation through Jesus Christ. The church is a company of the redeemed.

A member does himself and the church a grave injustice when he forgets how he became a member. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2: 8). Verses 13-19 of this same chapter tell us how we got together. "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them

that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God."

Our position in the family of God is confirmed by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (Romans 8:16).

Since our fellowship results from our spiritual birth, all who receive the Spirit are equal. This is the proper attitude for any family.

The son who is ready to attend college claims no more right to membership in his family than does his brother in kindergarten. A daughter primping for a date may be beautifully manicured and smelling sweet while her slovenly dressed teen-age brother is watching the boob tube, quite unconcerned about his appearance. They remain equal members of the family.

A father may have been born in Mexico, the mother in Chicago, and the children in other localities, but in the family all are equally regarded.

The church's witness is weakened by failure to remember how her fellowship came into being. The members tend to select friends in deference to economic status, educational accomplishments, personality traits, mutual material benefits, etc. Being born of the Spirit seems to have only a secondary significance, if that much.

Romans 12:4, 5 emphasizes the significance of our fellowship. Paul observes that we become members of one body. "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another."

To the Corinthians (12:12-



14) he writes, "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many."

This body of Christians must function as an organic unit. This means total commitment. The commitment of too many is but a fraction of what they have to offer.

It is bold to speak of total commitment, but the concept that we are members of a body leads to no other conclusion. "And the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee; nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you" (I Corinthians 12:21). Members of a body perform in behalf of the entire body, even when under duress.

To the athlete winning is the product of extra effort—whether in planning strategy, practicing, or when capabilities are put to the full test. The mind must be focused on achievement and cannot be preoccupied. The muscles must be toned to respond quickly and fully. The circulatory and respiratory systems accelerate to accommodate the excessive demands that strenuous muscular activity demands.

Much of the body suffers during training. Muscles tire and ache. They plead for relaxation. Appetites must be curbed so that only the most nutritious food will be consumed. Despite distress, the body responds to the urging of the mind.

When the Body of Christ, the Church, puts on its best effort, the members are required to meet the demands. There may be fatigue and distress, but the training goes on. The members of the body are committed, not

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# A TROUBLED MIND?

by Mary Holbert

**A** troubled mind in a world of troubles! Pollution, inflation, crime, drug abuse, wars and rumors of wars . . . we hear, see, and read constantly of these troubles. Then there are those more personalized troubles—poor health, infirmities, difficult inter-personal relationships in families, such as the famed "generation gap," financial stress—all these, and more, contribute to a troubled mind.

Is there any way out of this troubled maze? Many think not and live with a troubled mind; some think not and take their lives, not willing to live in such a maze.

But these are not the only alternatives. There is another: you can live in a troubled world without a troubled mind; How? It is very simple. "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6, 7).

So, peace of mind is ours if we'll accept the advice of the Psalmist and "... seek peace and pursue it." See Psalm 34:14. How can we do this? How can we gain the peace of mind which is past all understanding? The Scriptures give us many clues.

"Great peace have they which love thy law . . ." (Psalm 119:165).

"... to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Romans 8:6).

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace . . ." (Galatians 5:22)

Our peace of mind must come by the Spirit of God in our lives. The Holy Spirit will help us to live righteously in Christ Jesus. "And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever" (Isaiah 32:17). We may still have personal troubles and live in a troubled world, but with God's peace of mind we can face life with assurance that God will work out our problems. "... we know that all things work together for good to them that love God . . ." (Romans 8:28).

Believing and obeying must be part of our relationship with our God who gives us peace of mind. "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace . . . he is their strength in time of trouble" (Psalm 37:37, 39).

Since we live in a troubled world our relationship with our fellowman is important. Mark 9:50 says, "... have peace one with another." Romans 14:19 admonishes, "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another." Romans 12:18 explains that we should try to keep the peace even in troubled situations: "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men."

Jesus knew the problems of the time when He was on earth and He knows ours. He prayed to God, "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil" (John 17:15). God, in His wisdom, answers this

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having the option to cease functioning.

When a member is received into the church he is asked to make a commitment to be of service to the church as his help is needed, to study the Bible, and to support financially. Some balk at such a commitment. It is no more than the commitment we make at baptism (I Corinthians 12:13). Baptism means that we become a member of the body. This is to *have made* a total commitment.

The New Testament Church reflects this kind of unity. "Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Ephesians 4:3-6). We work in concert, dedicating our efforts to complete the tasks given us from above. When the church loses quality in her fellowship she becomes a relic.

#### Receive the Revelation of God's Will

A second purpose for the church is to do the Will of God. "To me, who am less than the least of all God's people, he has granted of his grace the privilege of proclaiming to the Gentiles the good news of the unfathomable riches of Christ, and of bringing to light how this hidden purpose was to be put into effect. It was hidden for long ages in God the creator of the universe, in order that now, *through the church*, the wisdom of God in all its varied forms might be made known to the rulers and authorities in the realms of heaven. This is in accord with his age-long purpose which he achieved in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Ephesians 3:8-11, New English Bible).

Those who consider that they must remain outside the church

to obey God are in direct conflict with this text. This passage is part of the Will of God. It declares that God manifests His wisdom THROUGH THE CHURCH.

Not only is this directed to independents, but it also summons the membership. It is up to us to receive and follow the Will of God. This is why we are a church. If it is the will of God that we help the needy, we must obey that call. If it is the Will of God that we befriend strangers, we make that our obligation. If it is the Will of God that we go, we go. If it is His will that we pay, we pay. We belong to the church through which *His* will is done.

This responsibility is brought into focus when one considers Christ's relationship to the church. "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. . . . For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones" (Ephesians 5:23, 24, 30).

One needs only to reflect on how important the head is to the human body to understand how willing the church must be to follow Christ.

Members of the church should have the same mind. "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together *in the same mind* and in the same judgment" (I Corinthians 1:10). In the next chapter (I Corinthians 2:16), Paul advises that "... we have the mind of Christ."

I Peter 4:1, 2 clarify what it means to have the mind of Christ. "For as much then as Christ hath suffered for us in

the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God."

Having the mind of Christ means being concerned about following the Will of God as was Jesus. This was His purpose. "I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me" (John 5:30). "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me" (John 6:38).

The eternal Presence is with those who obey the will of God. "Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me" (John 14:23, 24).

The church must go beyond offering fellowship. She operates as does the human body; every member contributing his necessary part. This body has Christ as Head. It is governed by the mind of Christ. The head is the center of the nervous system, sending impulses to all parts of the body. Jesus does this to the Church. He controls it and urges the participation of its membership.

In order to meet her responsibilities, the church must remain dead center on doing the Will of God. Man's willfulness causes detours and allurements. Man formulates disciplines that seem virtuous. No matter how much piety is reflected in certain rituals, the Church must remain dedicated to searching out and following the Will of God.

"Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary hu-



mility and worshiping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, and not holding the Head from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God" (Colossians 2:18, 19). When the church compromises her devotion to doing the Will of God, she becomes a relic.

### *Offer Defense Against Satan*

A third purpose of the church is to offer an efficient defense against the assaults of Satan. He is the enemy of God, and the adversary of man. He seeks the lion's share of man's attention. Too often he gets it. The devil is to be resisted. The church aids in this concern.

We need to concentrate on enduring. "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Hebrews 10:23-25).

As the human body is kept strong by proper diet and regular eating habits, the spiritual being is nourished by God's Word. It is essential that spiritual food be partaken of regularly. Failure to do this will make us vulnerable to barrages of the enemy.

"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock, Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remem-

ber, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears" (Acts 20:28-31).

In Ephesians 6 we are warned to take on the whole armour of God to stand against the devices of the devil. Included in this armour are the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, shoes with the gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit, which is the Word of God.

Each of these is a kind of defense. They are concerns of the church. The gospel of peace, truth, and righteousness are taught and embraced within the fellowship of the redeemed. The church seeks to inspire faith in God's Word and the gift of salvation. These qualities characterized the ministry of Christ. They should be identified with the church today.

In some areas the church has difficulty locating the influence of the adversary. Some prefer not to identify him because such a move may bring unwanted results. They are in the world and of the world. Any church so weakened is little more than a relic.

Does the church have a role in the world today? Assuredly it does!

It provides a unique fellowship for those who have experi-

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### **DEAD WEIGHT**

**"I've been a dead weight many years,  
Around the church's neck;  
I've let the others carry me,  
And always pay the check.  
I've had my name upon the rolls,  
For years and years gone by;  
I've criticized and grumbled too;  
Nothing could satisfy.**

**"I've been a dead weight long  
enough,  
Upon the church's back.  
Beginning now, I'm going to take  
A wholly different track.  
I'm going to pray and pay and work,  
And carry loads instead;  
And not have others carry me  
Like people do the dead.**

—Anonymous.

enced a new birth of the Spirit. There is surely a continuing need for the kind of association that directs us toward the development of spiritual values, that focuses our attention on better experiences.

There is compelling need for a fellowship that is concerned about the well-being of man, that recognizes his dignity. All too much affection is wasted on machines, status, economic advancement, comfort. The church urges investment in eternal values. Man needs this kind of prodding.

The church is not in jeopardy because her goals are out of touch with today's needs. Nor is the future of the church in difficulty because of her critics. Her lack of strength is caused by the inability of her membership to offer a total commitment. A fractured unity disables the body.

It is the plan and will of God to reveal His mysteries through the church. He has always done so, and He will continue.

Whether or not a church becomes a relic is determined by her ability to give in to God. Too often He is shoved aside. It is all too easy for man to think too highly of his own opinions and interpretation at the risk of twisting and ignoring God's Word.

God sends light to those who obey Him. A case in point concerns the developments in the Middle East. For over one-half century the Church of God (Seventh Day), believed and taught that there would be a return of the children of Israel to Palestine. They predicted the establishment of an Israeli nation; that it would develop great political strength and become a vexation to Edom—the Arab nations.

This teaching was scoffed at. It was regarded as an outlandish interpretation of Scriptures. But, the church persisted, because it was her understanding that this was God's plan.

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## IS THE CHURCH A RELIC?

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Today this doctrine still receives some criticism, but it is barren of intellect. All of the world recognizes the spectacular rise in strength of Israel. It is through the church that the mystery of God is revealed.

The danger the church faces today of becoming a relic (if indeed she does) is not because the enemy is so strong but because her membership has paid too little attention to establishing stronger defenses against his attacks.

This is an age when the base desires of man are shamelessly exploited. The person who insists upon discipline becomes the villain, and the uninhibited is the hero. To serve God is to escape reality in the eyes of some while the worship of Satan asserts individuality.

There is defense against the encroachment of Satanic forces. The Church is given this responsibility. Her membership must find new resolve to provide more time, devotion, and investment of imagination, affection and finance.

Those who lament the weakness of the church ought to stop stroking their chins and get into the battle.

The church has a role to play. Whether we will be a part of this great role will depend upon where we decide to cast our allegiance. A failure to decide is our support of Satan by default. To make a determination to serve the church which has Christ as its head is to join forces with a power that will enable us to be overcomers.

The degree of strength enjoyed by the church is not determined by the quality and relativity of her mission. It has always enjoyed a crucial mission. The strength of the church depends upon the ability of her membership to find that mission and insist upon fulfilling it.

## RADIO LOG

### FAITH FOR OUR TIME—Speaker: K. H. Freeman

KALN	Iola, Kans.	1370 kc	WEBC	Duluth, Minn.	560 kc
	9:15 a.m. Sabbath			6:15 p.m. Sabbath	
	9:15 a.m. Sunday			6:15 p.m. Sunday	
KBIF	Fresno, Calif.	900 kc	WEHH	Horseheads, N. Y.	1590 kc
KBLE	Seattle, Wash.	1050 kc		8:45 a.m. Sunday	
	11:45 a.m. Sabbath		WJOR	South Haven, Mich.	940 kc
KDHL	Faribault, Minn.	920 kc		9:45 a.m. Sunday	
	6:45 p.m. Sunday		WKJR	Muskegon Hts., Mich.	1520 kc
KESM	El Dorado Springs, Missouri	1580 kc		9:30 a.m. Sunday	
	9:30 a.m. Sunday		WBMC	McMinnville, Tenn.	960 kc
KNOF-fm	St. Paul, Minn.	95.3 mc		12:15 p.m. Sunday	
	5:45 p.m. Mon.-Fri.		WLSN-fm	Elizabethton, Tenn.	99.3 mc
KSWM	Aurora, Missouri	940 kc		9:00 a.m. Thurs.-Sun.	
	10:00 a.m. Monday-Wednesday		WOGO	New Smyrna Beach, Fla.	1550 kc
KTRB	Modesto, Calif.	860 kc		9:30 a.m. Sunday	
KTRB	Modesto, Calif.	104.1 mc	WPIT	Pittsburgh, Pa.	730 kc
	5:15 p.m. Sunday			9:30 a.m. Sunday	
WAXX	Chippewa Falls, Wis.	1150 kc	WPXY	Greenville, N. C.	1550 kc
	8:15 a.m. Sabbath			7:30 a.m. Sunday	
	8:15 a.m. Sunday		WSPD	Toledo, Ohio	1370 kc
WBNL	Boonville, Ind.	1540 kc		8:15 a.m. Sunday	
WBNL-fm	Boonville, Ind.	107.1 mc			
	7:45 a.m. Sunday				

### THE PROGRAM OF TRUTH—Speaker, Hugh Butrick

KTOK Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 1000 kc on the radio dial  
7:15-7:30 a.m. Sunday

### HOPE FOR TODAY—Speaker, K. C. Walker

KSKY Dallas, Texas 660 kc on the radio dial  
9:30 a.m. Saturday

### SEARCHLIGHT BIBLE BROADCAST—Speaker, Trinidad Padilla

KDFD	Van Buren, Ark.	1580 kc	KSJB	Jamestown, N. Dak.	600 kc
	8:00 a.m. Sunday			7:30 p.m. Mon.-Fri.	
KFEQ	St. Joseph, Mo.	680 kc	KWBA	Houston, Texas	1360 kc
	9:30 a.m. Sunday			8:00 a.m. Saturday	
KGFF	Shawnee, Oklahoma	1450 kc		9:30 a.m. Sunday	
	8:30 a.m. Sunday		WVNJ	Newark, N. J.	620 kc
				8:30 a.m. Sunday	



# The Rich Man and Lazarus

by Ray L. Straub

## PART I

An extraordinary story is recorded in Luke 16:19-31. A rich man lived in luxurious splendor, while at his gate lay a beggar who would have been content with no more than crumbs from the rich man's table. The beggar's only comfort came from dogs who licked his sores.

The rich man landed in hell. The beggar died and was carried by angels to "Abraham's bosom."

From flames of torment the rich man cried to Father Abraham, "... have mercy on me, and send Lazarus [the beggar], that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue..." The response brought a reminder that in their lifetimes the situation was reversed. Before death the plutocrat thought nothing about the need for one man to help another.

Pleas persisted asking that Lazarus be sent to warn the rich man's brothers lest they also end up in torment. Abraham advised that they had Moses and the prophets. The rich man insisted that his brothers would believe one who came from the dead, but Abraham was unconvinced.

Here the story ends, but not the controversy!

Is this an incident, or is this another of the several parables that are found in Luke's Gospel? If this was an occurrence there is good reason to believe that there are countless sinners suffering eternal torment in hell's flames, screaming to heaven for relief. At the same time the righteous rest on Abraham's bosom enjoying security due to an impassable chasm between them and hell—impassable to everything but screams of agony.

If this is a parable, it presents an analogy worth careful study so that an accurate and enlightening interpretation may be extracted.

A review of each incident in the story will enable us to determine whether we are given the description of an event.

"And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom..." (Luke 16:22.)

The story begins with what is obviously figurative language. Literally, there would not be room for many saints on Abraham's bosom! At the onset one is forced to acknowledge the use of symbolism in this narrative.

"... the rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments..." (Luke 16:22, 23).

If this was an occurrence, the rich man either passed through the grave in which he was buried and continued on to hell, or his body was laid in the grave while he was deposited in the flaming torment. To escape punishment he would either have had to transfer to Abraham's bosom, which the story itself describes as an impossibility because of the "fixed gulf," or he would have had to die. Those who believe that the rich man actually lived contend that the torment to which he was sentenced is eternal. This means he is there today, almost 2,000 years later, screaming to Father Abraham and suffering as agonizingly as ever with no relief in sight.

Each of these possibilities conflicts with other passages of Scripture that describe death and punishment.

1. The Bible teaches that those who die, whether righteous or not, remain in their graves. They do not proceed immediately to heaven or hell.

"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest" (Ecclesiastes 9:10).

"His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his



earth; in that very day his thoughts perish (Psalm 146:4).

"For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not anything, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion forever in anything that is done under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6).

2. If man goes to his reward or punishment immediately at his death, there would be no purpose in a resurrection. The Bible teaches that the dead will be resurrected. This means that those who died do not have their reward yet.

"Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead" (Isaiah 26:19).

"And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt" (Daniel 12:2).

3. The determination of whether a man goes to heaven or hell constitutes judgment. This event occurs at the second coming of Christ, not when a man dies.

"I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom" (II Timothy 4:1).

"And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (II Thessalonians 1:7, 8).

"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be

gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats" (Matthew 25:31, 32).

4. The resurrection of the righteous and judgment take place simultaneously. Man does not go to his reward before being resurrected and judged.

"Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (I Corinthians 15:51, 52).

"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (I Thessalonians 4:16, 17).

5. Were it true that the right-

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### MY DESIRE

Walter E. Isenhour

I'd rather have a tender heart  
And treat my fellows kind,  
Meanwhile my Christian love impart  
To bless them, soul and mind,  
Than have the rubies of the earth,  
Her diamonds and her gems,  
But know that I'm of little worth  
In any of her realms.

I'd rather wear a beggar's shirt  
And have a godly soul,  
And never own a foot of dirt,  
Nor reach a rich man's goal,  
Than be applauded for my wealth,  
Or reach some famous height,  
But know I'm worthless to man's  
health,  
And to his soul a blight.

I'd rather pray an humble prayer  
That reaches God on high,  
And have much Christian grace to  
share  
With these who weep and sigh,  
Than ride the highways of the land  
In luxury and ease,  
And live in pomp and splendor  
grand,  
But my dear Lord displease.

eous soul receives his reward in heaven immediately after death, surely righteous men such as Job would have been aware of it. The Bible describes him as being "perfect and upright" (Job 1:1). Speaking about his anticipated experiences following his decease, Job writes:

"O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave, that thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldest appoint me a set time and remember me" (Job 14:13).

"If I wait, the grave is mine house: I have made my bed in the darkness" (Job 17:13).

Other righteous men of old have not yet received their reward. If they have not, it is reasonable to conclude that no one has.

"Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day . . . For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand" (Acts 2:29, 34).

Hebrews 11, opens a report on men of faith by mentioning Abel, Enoch, Noah, and Abraham. Verse 13 reports "These all died in faith, *not having received* the promises. . . ."

The chapter continues by describing the struggles of others who defended their faith though it cost their lives.

"And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, *received not the promise*: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect" (Hebrews 11:39, 40).

Since they who have been declared worthy to receive eternal life have not yet been made perfect because God provided something better for us, it follows without question that no Lazarus has gone to his reward. The story is a parable.

6. To believe that the account of the Rich Man and Lazarus



was an occurrence suggests that every man's soul, whether righteous or wicked, is immortal. This means that even the wicked live everlastingly, albeit in torment. The Bible does not support such a teaching. To the contrary, the Scriptures say that the soul that sins will die.

"The soul that sinneth, it shall die..." (Ezekiel 18:20; see also verse 4).

"For the wages of sin is death..." (Romans 6:23).

"Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (James 1:15).

The "death" that is mentioned in connection with the punishment of the wicked indicates that the soul will not be preserved to endure endless torture. It speaks of destruction, which means ending its existence. The sinning soul is never promised nor threatened with an eternal life, not even in torment.

Note that the soul suffers the same fate as the body when God demands that the sinner give account.

"And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to *destroy both soul and body* in hell" (Matthew 10:28).

"For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch" (Malachi 4:1).

#### *Conversation Between the Rich Man and Father Abraham*

In the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus, we read of pleas by the rich man to have Lazarus deliver a mere drop of water onto the sufferer's tongue. This request was denied. The rich man then implored Abraham to send Lazarus to warn the rich

*(Continued on page 21)*

## **"Chariots of Iron"**

"And the Lord was with Judah; and he drave out the inhabitants of the mountain; but could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because **THEY HAD CHARIOTS OF IRON**" (Judges 1:19).

Something was wrong because God had promised them He would be with them to carry out this work. In his earlier conquests Judah was able to overcome all of the enemies of Israel. The people had asked this question "... Who shall go up for us against the Canaanites first, to fight against them? And the Lord said, Judah shall go up: behold I have delivered the land into his hand" (Verses 1, 2). The record continues with an account of a series of conquests until this one time when they were deterred by the people who had chariots of iron.

Who failed? Was it God who was unable to overcome the chariots of iron or was the lack on the part of the people—a lack of faith in the power of God? Obviously it was not God who failed. The prophet said: "Ah Lord God! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and **THERE IS NOTHING TOO HARD FOR THEE**" (Jeremiah 32:17).

The Bible abounds with examples of deliverance for God's people through means beyond that of human strength or ability. God has always shown that if it should be done it will be done. There are greater and more powerful chariots on God's side than on that of the enemy. The prophet Elisha wanted his servant to see how God is able to deliver, so when they were in a dangerous situation, we are told, "And Elisha prayed, and said, Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was **FULL OF HORSES AND CHARIOTS OF FIRE** round about Elisha" (II Kings 6:17).

There are two possible reasons for failure to realize the overcoming power of God in our conquests of the problems of life. First, we must be sure that it is God's will that the things we are asking for be done. Too often the things we ask God for are just things to satisfy our own selfish vanity. "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts" (James 4:3). Second, there is the matter of our faith. Too often, we doubt the power of God. We simply do not act on faith and let Him do the great things He has promised.

Our problem is like that of the young man with Elisha. He needed his eyes opened. He needed his faith strengthened. When our eyes are open, we can know God's will, and we will have the faith to understand that it will be accomplished. We will be able to realize that God stands ready to use us for many great things. And we may be assured that if we live up to what is expected of us, many unusual blessings will be ours.

"Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory..." (Ephesians 3:20, 21a).



## WHY JESUS CAME

(Continued from page 4)

has made provision for us to faithfully continue in man's fourth and lasting step to final salvation: OBEDIENCE to God, and walking in every way of truth and righteousness. If you have repented and been baptized, don't stop there: be obedient!

\* \* \*

That is why Jesus came. For each of these four purposes of Jesus' coming to earth (there may be other subordinate purposes), we have a corresponding requirement for man in his relationship to God. It has become plain that each step toward salvation for man is closely tied to a phase of Jesus' life and ministry. This is just what God wanted and planned: "For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell" (Colossians 1:19). We could say that the whole plan of salvation is "wrapped up" in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, during the relatively short time He spent here with men.

Let us summarize. Because we were creatures whom God loves, Jesus came to manifest that love by seeking and saving that which was lost. Jesus came and fulfilled the Scripture and now we can BELIEVE. Jesus came and died on the cross that we might REPENT of our sins. Jesus came and won the victory over death so we might rise from BAPTISM to walk in newness of life. Jesus came and taught us how to live to enable us to OBEY GOD and walk well-pleasing unto Him.

Let us not leave out any of the work of Jesus here on earth. To do so would be to diminish from the glorious plan and purpose of the eternal Son of God. The Heavenly Father has made plain His will for us through the life, death, and resurrection of His Son, our Saviour and Christ. That's why He came.

How will you respond to this tremendous love of God expressed through the lowly Jesus?

Nor let us omit any of the steps to our salvation. To do so would be folly on our part. We will be finally saved after each of these steps to salvation is taken: all of them are necessary.

And let us remember: these steps are only possible BECAUSE JESUS CAME.

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## THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

(Continued from page 7)

man's brothers to avoid his terrible fate. This plea was also denied.

Those insisting that the story is an actual occurrence allege the existence of communication between heaven and hell. The tormented are pleading for the resident(s) of heaven to offer them relief. Someone in heaven is having to state reasons why these petitions cannot be granted.

This is hardly the bliss we anticipate. "For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind" (Isaiah 65:17).

"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Revelation 21:4).

Once we receive immortality, we will not be hearing pleas from distant areas where former friends and relatives are perpetually singeing, blistering, and toasting; but never burning.

### A "Certain" Rich Man

It is suggested that reference to a *certain* rich man, traditionally named Dives, and to a *certain* beggar, named Lazarus, gives weighty evidence that a narration of the actual experiences of specific individuals is

offered. The name "Dives" is not mentioned in the Bible.

The word "certain" was often used in parables. In Luke 15 there are three parables. The third one begins, "A *certain* man had two sons."

Chapter 16 begins with a parable about "... a *certain* rich man, which had a steward ..." (Verse 1). In chapter 19 a story is identified as a parable about "... A *certain* nobleman (who) went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom ..." (Verse 12). There is every reason to receive the impression that the information given about the rich man and Lazarus is another parable.

### Lessons Drawn from Parables

Recognizing that information given in the Bible concerning death, the resurrection, and judgment, differs from the account given of the Rich Man and Lazarus, it becomes necessary to determine the lesson in this apparently fictitious story.

A number of parables given by Jesus were designed for the purpose of emphasizing a moral principle. All three illustrations (The 10 virgins, the Talents, the Sheep and the Goats) found in Matthew 25 warn of the need to prepare for the second coming of Jesus. They are prophetic.

The three parables in Luke 15 (the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin, and the Prodigal Son) all reveal the high value heaven places on one lost soul.

To be sure, there is a weighty moral lesson to be gleaned from the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus. It is stated in the latter part of Luke 16:31, "... If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." At any given moment one has all he needs to find his way to the throne of God. If the teachings available fail to convince a person of his need to find God, a more spectacular approach will enjoy no better success.



Beyond this, the symbolism in the parable is used to reveal an integral part of the Plan of God. Jesus told other parables to describe it, and they will aid in our analysis of the one in question.

In Matthew 21:28-32 we read about two sons who were asked to work in their father's vineyard. One refused, but later he changed his mind and went to work. The second son agreed to go but failed to present himself. Jesus closes the illustration with the question, "Whether of them twain did the will of his father?"

The response was, "The first."

Interpreting this parable for the chief priests and elders, Jesus pointed out, "... the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him" (Matthew 21:31, 32).

This parable is followed by one in which a householder let out his vineyard to wicked husbandmen. Each time a servant attempted to collect the owner's share of the harvest, he was sorely mistreated.

Finally, the landlord sent his son, thinking that surely the son would receive respect. Instead, the greedy husbandmen resented the presence of the heir and killed him.

The husbandmen were destroyed. "And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them" (Matthew 21:45).

Matthew 22 opens with a parable of a wedding feast. In this story, the invited guests respond by offering reasons to be excused. The king then sent his servants into the highways to get as many as they could, both good and bad, to attend the marriage feast. Therefore since this

story of the rich man and Lazarus follows the theme of the preceding two, it is logical to conclude that this also refers to the chief priests and Pharisees.

*To be concluded in  
the next issue.*

## ISRAEL (THE JEWS)

*(Continued from page 10)*

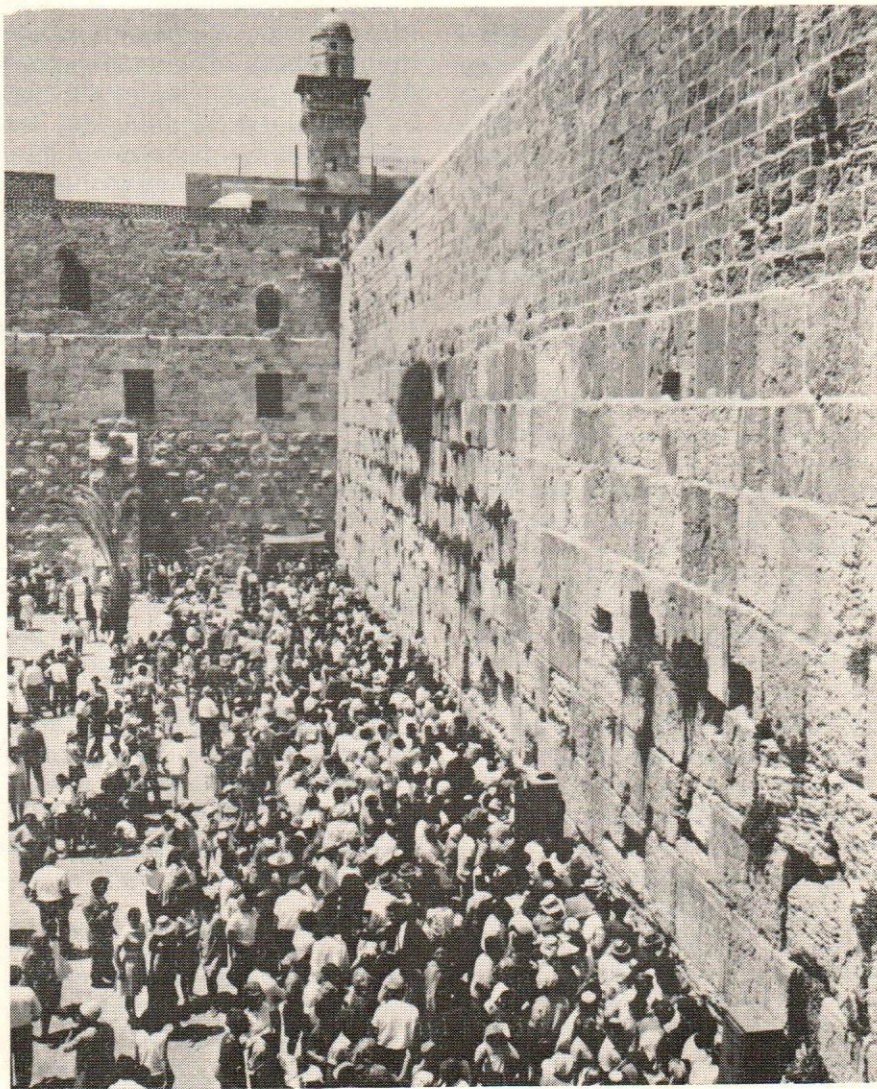
scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you: and your land shall be desolate and your cities waste" (Leviticus 26:32, 33).

"The Lord shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies: thou shalt go out one

way against them, and flee seven ways before them; and shalt be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth. . . . And thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword among all nations whither the Lord shall lead thee" (Deuteronomy 28:25, 37).

Since all Israel turned from God, the curses were carried out according to the prophecy. The prophecy was given regarding all 12 tribes of Israel and was fulfilled in all 12. The prophecy has been fulfilled to the letter in the history of the JEWS.

No other people have been so cursed. No other people have been scattered to all nations of



*This is the famous "wailing wall" in the old portion of the city of Jerusalem. The Jews took possession of this in the war of 1967.*



The story of the Rich Man and Lazarus is a parable. The previous issue of "The Bible Advocate" clearly explained why this is not a literal story. First, if it were literal, it would not harmonize with other Biblical doctrines; and second, at the time this story was told Jesus was giving a series of parables in which He was portraying special lessons regarding the Jewish people. This concluding portion of the article gives us the meaning the parable was intended to teach.

# The Rich Man and Lazarus

by Ray L. Straub

## PART II

### *The Rich Man*

In each of the three parables just cited, those who were expected to receive God's glory were turned aside in favor of others who had been considered less worthy. The son who agreed quickly to work, the husbandmen who were given opportunity to take part in a profitable venture, and the guests who were first honored with a marriage invitation, all failed to appreciate their advantaged position. They symbolized the chief priests and elders of the people. Since these men were leaders of Israel, it may be concluded that the rich man symbolizes the descendants of Jacob.

The parable of the rich man and Lazarus tells of an aristocrat who lived "sumptuously every day." This accentuates the lush pampering he enjoyed, while only dogs licked the oozing sores of the nearby but scorned Lazarus.

God's lavish concern for Israel is reported throughout the Old Testament. "For the Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. He found him in a desert land, and

in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye. As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: so the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him. He made him ride on the high places of the earth, that he might eat the increase of the fields; and he made him to suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock; butter of kine, and milk of sheep, with fat of lambs, and rams of the breed of Bashan, and goats, with the fat of kidneys of wheat: and thou didst drink the pure blood of the grape (Deuteronomy 32: 9-14).

"Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I swore unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest mine. Then washed I thee with water; yea, I thoroughly washed away thy blood from thee, and anointed thee with oil. I clothed thee also with

broidered work, and shod thee with badgers' skin, and girded thee about with fine linen, and covered thee with silk. I decked thee also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon thy hands, and a chain on thy neck. And I put a jewel on thy forehead, and earrings in thine ears, and a beautiful crown upon thine head. Thus wast thou decked with gold and silver; and thy raiment was of fine linen, and silk, and broidered work; thou didst eat fine flour, and honey, and oil: and thou wast exceeding beautiful, and thou didst prosper into a kingdom" (Ezekiel 16:8-13).

A student of Scripture is aware that these riches did not literally flow from heaven into Israel's vault. Rather, this metaphorical writing speaks of richer spiritual values such as those listed in Romans 9:4, 5: "Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenant, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen."

There is sufficient evidence to establish that Israel is symbol-



ized by the rich man of our parable. This nation was the object of the kind of generosity that only God could provide.

### *Lazarus, the Beggar*

Now we seek a nation or group of people who may be compared to the pauper of our parable. He wanted to be fed with the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table.

In Matthew 15:21-28 is found a report of a woman of Canaan who begged of Jesus, "... Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David: my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil."

Jesus ignored her. His disciples advised that He send her away. She was a Gentile. Jesus returned sufficient consideration to explain that He was "... not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel," and that it would hardly be appropriate to "... take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs."

The words used in her reply incontrovertibly identify her with the beggar, Lazarus. "And she said, Truth, Lord; yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table."

The children of Israel were keenly aware of the attention God focused on them since the calling of the patriarch, Abraham, from his home country. This awareness swelled their arrogance. They flaunted their self-righteousness and chanted about their religious superiority. Their overdeveloped self-esteem, compared to the unworthy Gentiles, was demonstrated in several incidents.

On one occasion two men went up to the temple to pray. One was a Pharisee, a sect of the Israelites. The other was a publican, a Gentile. The Pharisee spoke eloquently of his virtues, expressing no personal need. He was happy because he was not like the lowly publican.

Following the call of Matthew (Matthew 9:9), Jesus sat down to eat. He was joined by publicans and sinners. This immedi-

ately provoked an eruption from the sacrosanct sect. "Why eateth your master with publicans and sinners?" they piously questioned.

These among other incidents demonstrate that the religious distance between Israelite and sinner was at least as great as the economic distance between the opulent epicure and the unwanted vagrant.

### *Transition*

The death of the two principals in this parable represents the changes brought about in the relationship between Jew and Gentile by the Gospel. Israel appeared to be the logical recipient of the grace of God. It did not turn out that way. The Gentiles were more receptive.

"But what if God, desiring to

exhibit his retribution at work and to make his power known, tolerated very patiently those vessels which were objects of retribution due for destruction, and do so in order to make known the full wealth of his splendor upon vessels which were objects of mercy, and which from the first had been prepared for this splendour?

"Such vessels are we, whom he has called from among Gentiles as well as Jews, as it says in the Book of Hosea: 'Though the Israelites be countless as the sands of the sea, it is but a remnant that shall be saved; for the Lord's sentence on the land will be summary and final'; as also he said previously, 'If the Lord of Hosts had not left us the mere germ of a nation, we should have become like Sodom, and no better than Gomorrah.'

"Then what are we to say?"

## When Anyone Makes Up His Mind

Walter E. Isenhour

When anyone makes up his mind  
That he in life the best shall find  
By helping others find the best  
In Christian love and peace and rest,  
He'll find a sweetness and a bliss  
That for the world he would not miss;  
For nothing equals serving God  
And walking where the saints have trod.

When anyone makes up his mind  
To help the weak and lead the blind;  
To give a willing, helping hand  
To those in need throughout the land;  
To know what God would have him know,  
And go where God would have him go,  
He'll come out high above the crowds  
Which blighting wickedness enshrouds.

When anyone makes up his mind  
To be unselfish, good and kind;  
To be a man of faith and prayer  
And help his fellowmen to bear  
Their heavy burdens, day by day,  
And cheer them on life's toilsome way,  
He'll find his life is not in vain  
When life eternal he shall gain.



That Gentiles, who made no effort after righteousness based on faith; whereas Israel made great efforts after a law of righteousness, but never attained to it. Why was this? Because their efforts were not based on faith, but (as they supposed) on deeds. They stumbled over the 'stumblingstone' mentioned in Scripture: 'Here I lay in Zion a stumbling-stone and a rock to trip them up; but he who has faith in him will not be put to shame.'" (Romans 9:22-23, New English Bible).

### *Israel's Transition from "Wealth" to "Hell"*

The advantages received by Israel from God were explained when identifying this nation with the rich man. This favored nation lost her lofty status by rejecting the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Jesus first commissioned His disciples to go to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel." After giving them instructions He warned of the opposition they could expect to encounter among their own people: "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; and ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles" (Matthew 10:16-18).

John observed about Jesus that "He came unto his own, and his own received him not" (John 1:11). This statement is amplified in a lengthy discussion between Jesus and His countrymen found in chapters six through eight of John. This entire reference serves well to acquaint one with their swelling antagonism against Jesus. A short reference offers a worthy sample:

"I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill

me, because my word hath no place in you. . . . They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our Father. Jesus saith unto them, if ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. . . . He that is of God heareth God's words; ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God" (John 8:37, 39, 40, 47).

Another straightforward exchange between Jesus and those of His religious background is found in Matthew 23:13-39. The latter part of the last paragraph describes Israel's removal from the choice spot she occupied in receiving God's favors. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children to-

gether, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not: Behold, your house is left unto you desolate" (Matthew 23:37, 38).

The exchange in position of advantage between Jew and Gentile is summarized in Romans 11. "Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back away. I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles. . ." (Vv. 10, 11).

"And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then. The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted

(Continued on page 22)

## *Trends in Giving*

Various income brackets reflect differences in giving habits for the average American, but the results are not just what we might expect. The *Gospel Herald* reports that information released from U.S. income tax reports indicate the following percentages given to the various philanthropies: people in lower incomes, under \$5,000, give 4.69 percent; those from \$5,000 to \$10,000 give 2.91 percent; those from \$10,000 to \$15,000 give 2.54 percent; while those over \$15,000 give 3.28 percent. Churches receive approximately one-half of total contributions.

This indicates that people in the middle class income brackets are far less generous than either those in the poverty or higher class economic areas. In searching for reasons one might suspect the middle class is involved in the struggle to pay for their homes, two cars, a stereo, a boat, extensive vacations, etc.

While a person cannot buy his way into the Kingdom of God, and while there are many other important aspects to the Christian life, the measure of a person's dedication and surrender to God can be known by the way he shares his possessions. Giving is a way of expressing love. If we love God and love God's work we will share what we have to see that the church is supplied with the necessities to carry out the Great Commission.



not fit us for public service, but whether one be a professional man, or a mechanic, a merchant, or a servant, a physician, or a minister of the work, a toiler in the forest, or a farmer following the plow, he is regarded as one of God's workers.

We are admonished to love God "... with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength ..." (Mark 12:23). The product of the heart, the mind, the hand, whether that product be a life devotedly lived, or a sermon earnestly preached, or money honestly earned, if all is consecrated to the one end, the advancement of the gospel, the giver is counted as a worker with God.

What a joy, what a privilege! How wonderfully kind God is to allow us to share in the great work of saving souls for His eternal kingdom. Shall we not be more faithful in the part He has allowed us to play in human redemption?

The Lord takes these gifts, and by power of the Holy Spirit these gifts become channels of salvation for the lost whom we may not personally reach. Thus, does the giving of money for the support of the work fulfill that law which honors God as supreme, and calls upon us to love our neighbor as ourselves.

God does not accept money as a ransom from transgression. All the riches of the wealthy are not sufficient to cover a single sin. We cannot earn God's favor through the payment of money. Not by human works or deeds of righteousness are men saved.

"...Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold...but with the precious blood of Christ..." (I Peter 1:18, 19). Grace, that unmerited favor of God toward undeserving human beings, is heaven's only remedy that saves from sin (Ephesians 2:8). May we ever hearken to the voice of the Spirit as it urges us on in the footsteps of the blessed Master. —Reprint

## CRUCIFIXION AND RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

(Continued from page 7)

the act had been completed sometime in the past. The main thought of this verse is that He appeared to Mary Magdalene on the first day of the week.

Luke 24:21 is also easily misunderstood. The disciples walking with Jesus on the first day of the week said, "This is the third day SINCE these things were done." According to Matthew 27:62-66 the next day following the burial the chief priests had Pilate set a guard of sixty Roman soldiers at the grave, and seal the stone. This occurred on the next day after the death of Christ and would make this day Thursday. Friday would be the first SINCE these things happened, Saturday would be the second day SINCE these things happened, and Sunday would be the THIRD DAY SINCE these things happened.

May this message serve to help you in your study of this interesting question.

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## RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

(Continued from page 10)

in. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith..." (Vv. 17-20). "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery...that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in" (Verse 25).

### *Lazarus' Transfer to "Abraham's Bosom"*

Earlier it was pointed out that among the advantages enjoyed by Israel were the "adoption" and "covenants," and the "promises" (Romans 9:4). Most of these had to do with the covenant made by God with Abraham when he was first called to become the father of the great

Hebrew nation. It is interesting to observe the unfolding of these promises with the preaching of the Gospel.

"For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith" (Romans 4:13).

"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us...that the blessings of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith...For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus...And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Galatians 3:13, 14, 26, 29).

The mention that poor Lazarus was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom confirms the symbolism in this parable. Abraham's bosom has reference to the Abrahamic promises made available to the Gentiles. They are now the children of Abraham, heirs of promises made to him, through faith in Christ.

### *Conclusion*

Evidence found in the Bible leads to no other conclusion than that the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus is a parable. It does not describe an actual incident. The experiences of the principals in the story could not have actually happened. Man does not go to hell, nor to "Abraham's bosom" at the moment of death.

The parable is an analogy. The rich man represents Israel, and Lazarus symbolizes the Gentiles. At death these two men exchanged positions of advantage. The rich man who previously fared sumptuously every day was now in torment. The deprived Lazarus found himself in Abraham's lap.

Before the preaching of the Gospel, God heaped all the riches imaginable upon Israel. The



Gentiles were left out, regarded as dogs.

The preaching of the Gospel found no acceptance with Israel. They resisted it. Consequently, the offer of God's grace went to the Gentiles who were receptive. Israel found they were, because of their blindness, excluded from the blessings of the Holy Spirit. The Gentiles who accepted Christ were made heirs of the Abrahamic promises. The lessons are clear and are given for us to learn.

Just as the brothers of the agonizing rich man had Moses and the prophets to enable them to get their lives in order, so we have the Word. It is ours to accept and to be enriched by it.

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## PROPHECY — OUR GUIDE

*(Continued from page 13)*

many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased" (Daniel 12:4).

Knowledge, particularly along scientific lines, has been increased tremendously in the past few decades, but it has caused people to become more independent in their thinking and has led them away from the source of all knowledge—from God.

The Scriptures can become to us a "fountain of blessing," something solid upon which to build our faith, and a door through which we can have knowledge of some of the wonderful things that are to happen in the future. Perhaps it would be well to cite a few of the well known prophecies, and see the positive way they refer to our times and the events that we may very well expect to happen in the near future.

Let us give further thought to the opening text of this article. Remember, it says: "For, behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem" (Joel 3:1). The

very word "behold," is an indication there is something for us to see, to view, to observe. It then speaks of "those days, and in that time" as a significant era of the future, and describes things which are to happen.

Verse 2 is revealing in that it speaks of things that are to happen to the Jewish people. It says: "I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land."

There are many Scriptures to be found relative to the dispersion of the Jewish people into all the world if they would forsake the Lord and fail to obey His commandments. Leviticus 26:14-18 is one of the earlier prophecies of the punishment God would allow to come upon these people.

There are also many prophecies of the regathering of these people to their homeland, and then we have the warning of the text we have under consideration that God will bring the nations there to battle over that land. He has said clearly that He will bring all nations to battle over this people in the valley of Jehoshaphat. The fulfillment of this prophecy is of real importance to us now for we have seen the fulfillment regarding the return of this people to their homeland.

Amos 9:8-10, 13-15 tells us how the Jewish people would be scattered and how they would be returned again to their homeland. It is comforting to see how these events have been fulfilled before our very eyes. It is something to behold. It certainly verifies the truth of prophecy.

Favor has been demonstrated in this twentieth century toward these people on many occasions. "The Balfour Declaration" was a document that

proved favorable to the Zionist movement. Even though the people of Israel have experienced a measure of trials and tribulation, they have forged ahead (miraculously) to become the state of Israel. May 14, 1948 these people became a nation to themselves, even after many centuries of dispersion. It had to be a miracle. This nation is also a source of much dispute among the nations. She has become a "burdensome stone for all people" as prophesied in Zechariah 12:3.

This is what is said of this nation in some of our popular news media: President Nixon said in "Life" magazine in July, 1970: "The situation in the Middleeast now is terribly dangerous, more dangerous to us even than Vietnam because a collision of the superpowers is possible in the Middleast."

U.S. News and World Report, July, 1970, said this: "Not since the June war of 1967 has the threat of another Arab-Israeli showdown caused greater worry. This time stakes are far higher with super-powers in perils of squaring off behind allies over which they have no control."

### *Gathering of the Nations*

We keep thinking of the prophecy in Joel where he says, "I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat..." (or valley of Judgment) (Joel 3:2). Another prophet at another time gave the same prophecy. He said: "For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle..."

Even as the regathering of this ancient people and the re-establishment of their nation in their homeland has been carried out in the face of much opposition (Jeremiah 30:3 and Isaiah 46:11), so the gathering of all nations to battle over them is also inevitable (Matthew 24:35).



What is the

# 'Testimony of Jesus'?

by Ray L. Straub

The latter part of Revelation 19:10 makes this statement: "...for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." Some have been made to wonder whom this is speaking about, particularly since the Seventh Day Adventist church claims this was fulfilled in their early leader. To them this verse implies that the "testimony of Jesus" and "spirit of prophecy" are synonymous terms.

They say that the "spirit of prophecy" and the "gift of prophecy" are "inseparably connected." I place these last two words into quotes not only because they are direct quotations (*Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrines*), but also because of this interesting choice of words. Obviously, they are meant to communicate the concept that the *spirit* of prophecy and the *gift* of prophecy are the same. Their explanations bear out this interpretation. At the same time, they seem to offer recognition that Scriptures do not support such a contention.

One of their cardinal doctrines declares that "Seventh-day Adventists believe that this gift (of prophecy) was manifested in the life and ministry of Ellen G. White." This assertion leads many to conclude that the life, utterings, and writ-

ings of Ellen G. White form or are part of the testimony of Jesus or the spirit of prophecy.

Before proceeding with an explanation of what the testimony of Jesus is, it will be helpful to reflect on the assertion that the *spirit* of prophecy and the *gift* of prophecy are the same. This is an important link in the chain upon which the church's claim hangs.

Their own explanation of the relationship between gift and spirit undermines the implication that they are the same. Quoting from *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrines* (page 96), "The Spirit of prophecy is intimately related to the gift of prophecy, the one being the *Spirit that indites* the prophecy, *the other the evidence of the gift bestowed*. They go together, each inseparably connected with the other. The *gift of the manifestation* of that which the Spirit of God bestows upon him whom, according to His own good purpose and plan, He selects as the one through whom such spiritual guidance is to come."

This says that the spirit and gift are not the same. It observes correctly that the spirit provides the inspiration, while the human vessel displays the ability. A faith in the prophetess might defend her possession of

the *gift*, but how can it identify her or her work as being the *spirit*?

Simple reasoning would then force us to conclude that if Mrs. White had the *gift* of prophecy, her ministry cannot be considered to be the *spirit* of prophecy. This destroys the linkage between the writings of Mrs. White and the testimony of Jesus. A car cannot run without gasoline, and in this way they are inseparably related. Nonetheless, an automobile and gasoline are not the same.

When members of the denomination declare that their church has the spirit of prophecy, they make a statement that finds support in neither the Bible nor their own doctrines. They may claim the gift, as do others, but the spirit is different.

This places the prophet(ess) of one religious organization alongside those of all others. Everyone who prophesies claims the gift. They all teach that their utterings and revelations have a divine source. Whether their claim is more genuine than others is open to conjecture. One thing is sure, it is not unique.

Unfortunately, prophecy is an area of study where few people allow caution and intellect to temper their curiosity. Here the



gullible and naive become experts. They accept almost all explanations as being profound and precise. It seems we all want to know something about prophecy, so as soon as a teaching is grasped, we tend to accept it as our belief even though we have not determined its accuracy. Few people demonstrate that they have the ability or the learning to adequately investigate the validity of a proposed prophetic interpretation. Consequently, the gift is claimed, but it is not genuine.

What is the "testimony of Jesus"? While Revelation 19:10 identifies it as the spirit of prophecy, it is not the only passage where the phrase is found. The testimony of Jesus is not always related to prophecy.

John the Baptist said of Jesus, "And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony. He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true. For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him" (John 3:32-34). Jesus' testimony is composed of the Words of God and that which Jesus had seen and heard.

This testimony of Jesus is mentioned in Paul's introduction to his first letter to the Corinthians, "I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ: that in everything ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge; even as the *testimony* of Christ was confirmed in you: so that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Corinthians 1:4-8).

Paul is making a skillful play on the use of the verb "confirm." He points out that their lives gave evidence of (confirmed) the words of Jesus abiding in them, and this in turn would

hold them steadfast (confirm them) until the return of Jesus. The testimony of Jesus was observed in the lives of the membership of the Corinthian Church, as well as all others who believed, accepted and demonstrated faith in Jesus Christ.

Similar use of the phrase is found in II Timothy 1:8, another of Paul's introductions. "Be not thou therefore ashamed of the *testimony of our Lord*, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God."

Here the definition of the "testimony of our Lord" is clearly presented. The advice given is not to be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, but instead to participate in the gospel work, accepting afflictions as they arise. There is no allusion to the gift of predicting.

This usage of the testimony continues right into the book of Revelation. It is interesting to note the description of the opening of the fifth seal in Chapter 6:9, "And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the *testimony* which they held." Chapter 12:10 says that now "... is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down..." The following verse tells how this was accomplished: "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the *word of their testimony*; and they loved not their lives unto the death." This compares to the previous use Paul made of "confirm" in I Corinthians 1:6. The testimony was *confirmed* in the brethren, and this in turn would *confirm* (keep them steadfast) until the coming of Christ. In Revelation, the testimony gave power to overcome.

This brings to our attention a comparison of two more interesting verses, Revelation 12:17 and Revelation 14:12. We have

just been told that the brethren overcame the accuser by "... the word of their testimony..." The last verse of the chapter reports, "And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the *testimony of Jesus Christ*." This testimony gives sustaining power.

Hence, chapter 14, speaking of those who did not fall victim to God's wrath, says, "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the *faith of Jesus*." The "testimony of Jesus Christ" (Revelation 12:17) and "faith of Jesus" (Revelation 14:12) as used here are synonymous. One would have to be prejudicially opinionated to reject such an obvious implication.

These texts all speak of the message that Jesus brought from God. This message of salvation is the gospel of Jesus Christ, the power of God unto salvation, witnessed in those who receive Jesus by faith. The testimony of Jesus is hardly described as a latter-day gift identifying the "remnant church."

Now we proceed to the specific treatment of Revelation 19:10, where it is stated that "... the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." This statement concludes the description of a circumstance that is reported in at least two other references in the Book of Revelation. They have to do with the specific transmission of the prophecies in the Book of Revelation to John, its author.

Particular attention must be directed toward the opening of this book. It is introduced as "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John: who bare record of the word of God, and of the *testimony of Jesus Christ*, and of all things that he saw. . . . I John,



who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Revelation 1: 1, 2, 9).

These important parts of the introduction must be kept in mind:

(1) It is the revelation of Jesus Christ.

(2) It was to inform His servants of things which must shortly come to pass.

(3) He sent and signified (made it known) by His angel to John.

(4) John then recorded (a) the word of God, (b) the testimony of Jesus, and (c) all things that he saw. Verse 9 mentions just the first two.

Note the similarities mentioned in the conclusion of Revelation, beginning with chapter 22:6, "And he said unto me These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done. Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book. And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant; and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God."

The conclusion mentions that:

(1) The sayings were faithful and true.

(2) The Lord God sent His angel.

(3) He was to shew His servants things which must shortly be done.

(4) Upon seeing those things, John fell down before the angel to worship him.

(5) John was restrained be-

(Continued on page 20)

## Woman's "Undress"

Down through the history of the true Church, from the days of the Apostles Peter and Paul, men and women in touch with God and faithful to the teaching of these pillars of the Church, have ever felt the need of preaching and writing on "woman's dress." Today there is a crying need of sounding the alarm against woman's "undress."

To follow the fashions of the world at any time is as positively forbidden in the Word of God as is stealing or filthy talking, but to be "conformed to this world" in dress at the present time, is more than disobedience of a Divine command, it is a crime against humanity.

Parents are committing crime against the children. Mothers are committing sin against their daughters in sending them out into the world clad in a manner to invite insult. Wives are committing crime against their own husbands and the husbands of others.

It is a crime of sisters against brothers, of maidens against their suitors, and of school girls against their mates—a crime committed by women against their employers and fellow workmen. It is a crime against ministers, who in turn are criminally unfaithful in allowing this sin against Heaven and God Himself. There is no other one crime at this hour that is sweeping souls on to perdition at a swifter rate. Much is said about moving pictures, and its wrong influence, but woman's "undress" is destroying her.

Had a woman appeared on the street thirty years ago in the undressed condition of today, she would have been arrested.

A young woman opposed to the plain teaching of the Word of God as to modest dress had been preparing herself for missionary work. Recently she arrived at her field of labor in a heathen land, but on leaving the boat was informed by officials that she must lengthen her skirts or leave their town—a sermon in itself.

A young man to whom were quoted the words of the Son of God: "Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart," replied, "Everyone is guilty." Though not absolutely true, his answer is a shame to womanhood.

If this terrible evil were confined to avowed sinners, it would be bad enough, but stand at the church doors and see it stalk in and out in gay colors, bearing the name of "Christian." Voices must be raised to cry: "It is not Christian." Christians are separate from this sin of the flesh manifested in wearing thin clothing, low neck dresses, and short skirts.

As against all this, how plain and simple are the words of the Apostle Paul: "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works (I Timothy 2:9, 10). Beautiful words are these to one who has them in her heart, true to the words of an old-time writer: "Everyone loves that most without him, which is most suitable to that within him." The "undress" is a picture of the heart.

—From *Crusader*, a publication in India.



and fears often associated with witnessing.

## SIMPLE GUIDELINES

A few simple guidelines for personal evangelism, accompanied by a willingness to be led by the Spirit of God, will accomplish great results. We suggest the following general outline in witnessing: 1) The pre-gospel conversation. 2) A background of their church affiliation and contact. 3) A testimony about your church. 4) The message you want to share. 5) The response to your presentation.

The mission of the church is the Great Commission of the Bible. MOTIVATED MANPOWER, instructed with the MESSAGE of truth, supported by the MONEY of interested consecrated Christians, equipped with the training of effective METHODS, will result in an effective missionary program in and through the church.

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## 'TESTIMONY OF JESUS'

(Continued from page 7)

cause the angel said he was only a fellowservant "...of them which keep the sayings of this book."

(6) The angel encouraged John to worship God.

A review of Revelation 19:9, 10 can now easily be placed into correct perspective. "And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God. And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the *testimony of Jesus*: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

Note the many similarities:

(1) These are true sayings of God.

(2) John fell down to worship and was restrained.

(3) The messenger (unidentified here) declared himself to be a fellowservant "...and of thy brethren that have the *testimony of Jesus*..." (apparently the same as "*the sayings of this book*" in 22:9).

(4) John was encouraged to worship God.

(5) The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

What could that last phrase mean? We learned earlier that the testimony of Jesus was the Word He brought from God. The last passages considered informed us that the revelations given to John were also the words of God, brought and made known to him by an angel.

A careful examination of Revelation 22:6 provides the answer to the meaning of the phrase. "And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the *Lord God of the holy prophets* sent his angel..."

A comparison of versions along with notations in the margin of many Bibles inform that the "Lord God who inspires the prophets" (The New English Bible; Phillips) sent his angel. Or, the Lord God "of the spirits of the prophets" (marginal reading; Berkley Version of the New Testament) sent his angel. These clarifications are easily accepted because they fit into the con-

text without changing impressions and meanings.

Knowing that it is God who inspires prophetic utterings, and having learned that the prophecies in Revelation are the words of God, sent by His angel, we can understand that the words of God and the prophetic inspirations given by God are the same. The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. The Words of God inspire the prophecies.

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## IN THE NAME OF JESUS

(Continued from page 16)

thing. Builders of what? They claim to be building the kingdom of God, but it never will be built without Christ.

We must remember, "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:10, 11).

And on the Day of Judgment: "For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Romans 14:11, 12).

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## Courage in Perspective

Greek history gives the record of a soldier in the army of Antigonus who had an extremely painful disease and did not expect to live long. He would go into the battles with reckless courage, and was soon recognized for his valor. Antigonus wanted to reward the man for his bravery, and have his usefulness extended, so he sent him to the best physician available, and the man's health was restored.

He no longer would risk his life as before. He then had other things to look forward to such as his home, his family and other comforts. His usefulness to the general was gone.

When we place too high a value on this life and its enjoyments we are likely to be valueless in Christian service.

The apostle Paul should be our example. He said, "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ" (Philippians 3:7, 8).